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The Great Commission.

NUMBER II.

"Go ye—and make disciples of all nations; baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."

This is the great command, and it divides naturally into four parts. The first is, "Go ye." Mark has it, "Go ye into all the world;" and as much is implied here, for, to make disciples of all nations the nations must be visited. The apostles and first disciples made a laudible effort to carry out this part of the great commission. They cheerfully left home, country, kindred, and all they had, and traveled by land and sea to preach the gospel and make disciples. No self-denial, or labor, or suffering seemed to be too great for them to endure. Such was the love that they had for their Master, Jesus, and for their fellowbeings, that they were willing to go any where, and to be used in any way that would advance the cause and save souls. They did not seem to be very systematic in their work; but they were wonderfully, astonishingly in earnest. No sacrifice was too great, if they could but obey Christ and save souls. If the spirit of self-denial and zeal that characterized the disciples of the first century had been perpetuated, long ago the gospel would have been preached in every nook and corner of the habitable globe; but, as it is, in this nineteenth century less than one-half of earth's millions hear the gospel of Christ at all. Here we are, flooded with gospel light, religious liberty, heaven's choicest blessings and earth's richest gifts, and what are we doing? What a terrible stupor, what lack of faith and love, and what coldness and indifference have settled down on us! When we compare ourselves as we are with what we should be, we must almost be ashamed to confess that we are disciples of Jesus and brethren of these first Christians.

But what will we do? We have taken a high position. We have declared before men and in the presence of heaven that we will take the gospel of Christ as the man of our counsel; that we will obey its teachings, and that, in this respect, we will be a peculiar people. How many

of us have denied ourselves of the pleasure of home and the comforts of this life that we might "go unto all the world" as the Savior commands? It is high time that we awake and go to work like men who mean to carry out what we profess.

Our sisters are making an "Endeavor," and I hope and pray that their effort will be crowned with success. I should be glad to hear of their sending out their first Missionary; and I should be happy to learn that the church is most thoroughly aroused on this subject, so that we will not, can not, rest till we do what we can. "Go ye;" "go ye unto all the world."

But it takes money, and much money, as well as self-denial and labor. Well, what if it does? Did not Jesus know that it would take money as well as muscle, and brain, and soul? Certainly he did. But if he could lay aside his heavenly glory, for a while, to redeem and save us, it is reasonable that we should deny ourselves of some earthly comforts and possessions for the salvation of ourselves and our fellow-men. There are comparatively few who are willing to give one-half in dollars and cents what Christianity is worth to them. Every Christian should make a prayerful effort to use all his earthly possessions in such a way as to contribute the largest possible amount to the cause of Christ. Here is a problem for each one to solve for himself. The question comes to us all, "How much owest thou my Lord?" It is to be feared that many write but a small portion of what they feel the debt to be. If we have been thinking that we could serve God and perform Christian duties without using any money, we have made a mistake, and we should seek light and improvement on this point. We can not all go out to preach, but we can all help those who can.

Although I have but hinted at the obligations imposed on us by the command to "go unto all the world," I must leave this part of the text and pass on to notice the next in order.

"Make disciples of all nations." This is the second item of the great command; and it is, indeed, a great command in itself. The sense, of course, is to make disciples of Jews and gentiles—of persons in all nations. We may have our preferences, perhaps, but they must not amount to prejudice. There is no respect of persons with God, our Father; none with Jesus, the Redeemer and Savior, and there must be none with us. There is, perhaps, no harder lesson for us to learn than this, that we should love the Chinese, the African, and the Digger Indian. The lesson, of course, is clearly taught on every page of Holy Writ, and in the whole scheme of redemption and plan of salvation, but there is a hard place in our hearts just where the impression is to be made. The influences of early, carnal training, and of society, are so rooted in us, that it is hard for us to be set free. It requires such an outpouring of the love of God as will overflow all the channels of our affections. We must have our eyes so anointed with the grace of God, that we can see beyond the dusky skin and homely features of the outward man; that we can see a little of what God saw, when he

"so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" John 3:16. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth;" and we should see, and know, and feel that the lowest tribes on earth are our brethren, and are entitled to our sympathy, our love, and our helping hand.

But what are we to do with the nations? "Make disciples." This implies a great deal. It not only means that we are to preach the gospel in such a way that those who hear it may assent to its truthfulness; but to impress its claims on their hearts, and so to exhort and beseech them, that they will gladly receive the word and accept of salvation on the terms of the gospel. It seems to be a hard matter to get some men to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Redeemer and our Savior; but there are many who profess to believe this, who, nevertheless, are far from being willing to become his followers and servants. This is the great work that is enjoined upon us.

From the foregoing it appears that it is not enough to be able to preach the gospel; but the Christian should familiarize himself with the best ways of arousing and winning souls. He should be able to answer excuses to show the advantages of a Christian life, to appeal to all the best affections, and to arouse and alarm the fears of the guilty, if need be. The Christian worker must pray, and preach, and warn, and plead; and he must show the power and praise of Christianity in his own life, in his walk and conversation in the world.

Different persons are brought up under different teachings and influences. Some worship Brahms, others the Grand Lama, and many worship the god of this world in various forms. The successful worker must be able to detect idolatry and to correct the idolatrous. And if a man makes an excuse of real estate, personal effect, or human relationships, the Christian must be ready to show the unreasonableness of all such pleas.

Let no one think that he has nothing to do in this great work. It is not enough to make a profession in the hope of being saved; but we must endeavor to discharge the duties which such a profession implies, and one of the duties is to make a faithful effort, at least, to "make disciples of all nations."

J. W. B.

Altamont, Cal., Jan. 28, 1888

Public Worship.

There are but two passages in the New Testament in which we are commanded to attend public worship. The principal one is the oft-repeated passage, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourself together as the manner of some is." The other is where the apostle directed that "prayers and supplications and intercessions be made for all men," where he was undoubtedly referring to the public services of the church. With these two exceptions there is not a single direct and positive command in the whole of the New Testament to assemble together for public worship. This is a very remark-

able fact, and it is the more remarkable when the direction, first referred to, not to absent oneself from public worship was in the closest connection with the most solemn and terrible warning of the danger of apostasy. Immediately after the exhortation of Heb. 10:25, came those words: "For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

How does it come to pass if it were so perilous to stay away, and so important to go, that there should be so little said in the New Testament to urge men to worship in public? This could only be accounted for in one way, and that was that the duty of public worship was so universally recognized and acted upon in the Christian church from the very first, that there was no need to tell men, and command and urge them to worship in public. We find the church always assembling together on the first day of the week to worship, break bread, and hear the Word preached, on every occasion in the Acts of the Apostles where the church was described and spoken of. The early church was often persecuted, and it was possible that some would be deterred from meeting in public from fear of this persecution. So we find in church history that public worship among Christians was a thing of such strop and fixed habit, of such crying and absolute necessity; there was no need to exhort it, and men could only be kept from it by fear of punishment and suffering.

Only kept from church by fear of punishment and suffering! What a strange contrast to the state of the church in the present day! Was the state of the church such now that it was only the fear of punishment and dread of suffering that kept men from church? Or might it not be with more truth said there were many men and women who nothing, but the fear of punishment would drive to church? The early church consisted entirely of communicant members, and these communicant members felt that there was a life, a grace, to be had in the coming together and the breaking of bread that could be had elsewhere, and they needed that life to sustain them, and they could not live without it. The majority of modern Christians—for it would not do to call people living in these Christian countries by any other name—are not communicants. The majority of these modern nominal Christians have devised for themselves a modern Christianity, slender, attenuated, weak, hardly able to do an honest day's work for God, and all for the want of the divine food which should strengthen. So this modern substitute being a comparatively feeble and comparatively easy Christianity, the motive for public worship was not so apparent as it was in early days. Then they went because they knew the presence of their Lord would be with them. The lack of spiritual life, the consequence of not attending divine service, would naturally breed apostasy and heresy. The attendance at church may be looked upon as the thermometer by which we may gauge

the desire in the human heart for God's presence. If the desire is strong, it will surmount the many trivial hindrances which they now plead for their non-attendance. Let us ponder over these things and benefit by them.

M.

The Christian Course.

Nature and religion is progressive. Nowhere in the natural and moral worlds has God commanded us to stand still, but every where to go forward. The flower bud forces itself towards the light, the sun pursues his lofty course, and the spirit of man more elastic than the flower-bud, and restless as the sun, does likewise know no stagnation on the way of its endless development. Progress should be the Christian's law. Slumbering, when God calls us to watch and work, is a sure way to deserve the name of a "wicked and slothful servant."

Paul uses an illustration that embraces every feature of Christian progression. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, etc. Let us examine.

The difficulties of Christian life—"Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Thus speaks the voice of God. "A light thing," says the superficial man, who builds without counting the cost. "A heavy impracticable task," says the pusillanimous man, who looks only to his own weakness. It was no short race the prize-runner in the Olympic games had to make. However the distance could be measured, and the sharp eye could see the post marking the goal. How different the Christian race! It is a course of faith, just as long as life. We use the word faith in the wide sense in which the writer of this epistle employs it—in the sense of unbounded confidence in all God reveals and promises to us in Christ, and we maintain that the habit of looking up to those invisible and eternal things is just that which characterizes Christian life.

Look at the words, "lay aside every weight." There are so many rooted prejudices, so many earthly cases, which hinder our progress. Prejudices are often the greatest weights that keep the Christian from progressing. The Christian course would be a great deal easier, if instead of asking the question, "Is this really dangerous?" we would ask, "Is it likely to further the development of my spiritual life?" When men become warped up in prejudices—taught to conform to one particular line, tolerating no possible deviation—then any change of thought or action is viewed with suspicion and instead of asking if it is beneficial they will look only for the dangers, and these are mostly looked for through colored spectacles.

The apostle adds, "and the sins which doth so easily beset." We are told that a traitor secretly followed the prize runner, and before any one observed it, threw a snare around him in which his foot got entangled. In this we see the nature of our besetting sin. Runner in the spiritual race, beware lest the world ensnare your feet, beware lest the fear of man ensnare you fatally. The most difficult demand is